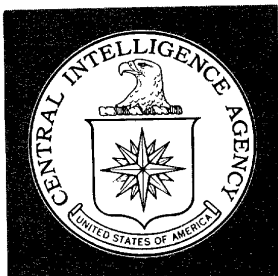


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CIA/SAVA / WVINL 710320



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 20 March 1971

NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

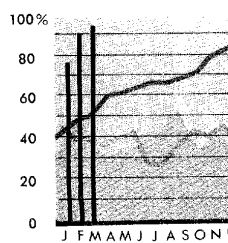
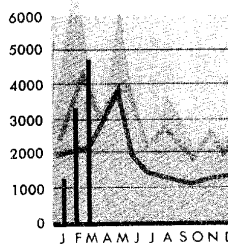
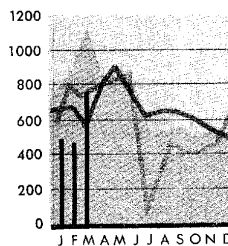
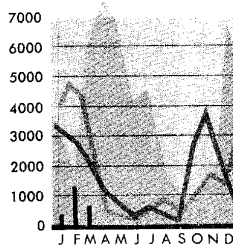
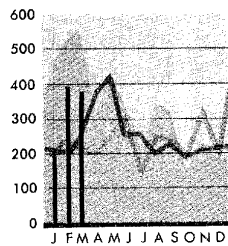
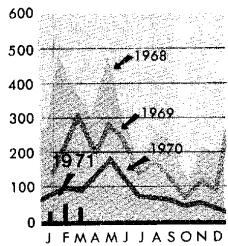
For the President Only

~~Top Secret~~

SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971

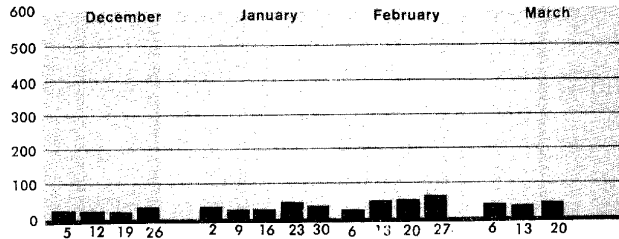
Weekly average for each month



DECEMBER 1970 - MARCH 1971

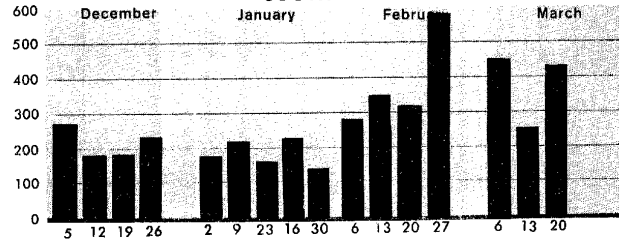
Weekly data as reported

US BATTLE DEATHS



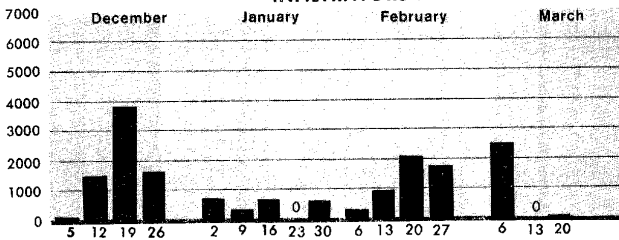
increased to 50 from the 45 of last week.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS



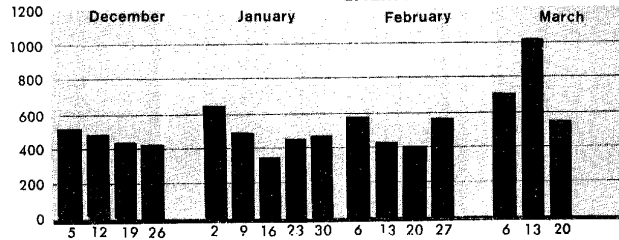
jumped sharply to 444 this week compared to last week's 262 as activity in Laos increased. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.

INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE



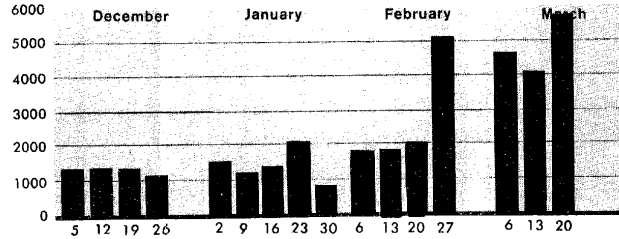
remained low with only three specially designated groups totaling 42 personnel noted. The infiltration estimate since 1 October 1970, thus, stays at some 48,300 - 49,800.

ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS



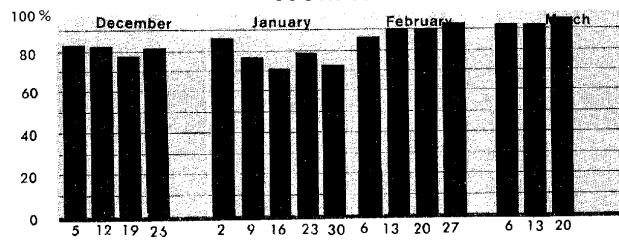
dropped to 562 from the 1,023 (540 of which were late AAA reports) of last week.

ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION



reflected the increased pace in Laos and Cambodia as totals rose significantly to 5,750 from last week's 4,003.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS



as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces climbed to 97% versus the 94% of last week.

Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In the LAM SON 719 area, enemy activity during the past week has been directed at impeding the withdrawal of friendly forces from Laos. Combat activity has been intense and losses have been heavy on both sides. Official reporting indicates that most ARVN units have maintained tactical integrity, the withdrawal has been generally orderly, and is apparently going according to plan. At present, ARVN forces maintain two strong points in Laos: One is on Route 9 almost three miles west of the border. The other, Fire Support Base DELTA, is some four miles due south of the base on Route 9 and is currently under heavy enemy pressure.

In South Vietnam, phase one of the spring campaign (K 850) is scheduled to begin in the Front 4 area of MR-1 on the night of 28/29 March 1971. The western highlands of MR-2 experienced a modest increase in Communist-initiated military activity during the week. Fighting in the remainder of South Vietnam was low until the weekend, when the enemy increased the tempo of attacks by fire in the Delta region.

Military activity in Cambodia remained at a low level until the weekend, when an increase in Communist attacks occurred around the country. Lines of communication continue to be a prime enemy target. The South Vietnamese offensive in the Chup Plantation area continues to encounter stiff resistance. In spite of the heavy losses suffered by the Communist forces, they have fought back with some damaging rocket and mortar attacks.

Action in north Laos expanded over the weekend, when enemy rocket fire fell on the airfield and military installations adjacent to the Royal Capital of Luang Prabang, causing considerable material damage and increasing the already mounting government and popular concern for the capital and the safety of the King. The rocket attack was launched in coordination with ground attacks on various government positions east of Luang Prabang. Attacks were also launched against two government positions along the Mekong River to the northeast, which inhibit complete enemy control of the major waterborne logistical system into Laos from northwestern North Vietnam. In the other major front in northern Laos, southwest of the Plain of Jars, the enemy is continuing to put pressure against Ban Na and the defenses of Long Tieng. [REDACTED] plans for attacks on these govern- NSA
ment positions. In south Laos, friendly guerrillas are continuing to ambush enemy trucks around Saravane, but the four-battalion DESERT RAT task force has given up its plan to attack Muong Phine and is withdrawing. There have been no changes in the tactical situation on the Bolovens Plateau during the past week.

Enemy Infiltration

The expected degradation in timeliness and reliability of our estimates of enemy infiltration resulting from the loss of the "Vinh window" in early January apparently is being felt as detections of personnel infiltration continued at an extremely low level. During the past week, no groups were noted in North Vietnam and only three small, specially designated groups were observed in southern Laos. While the impact of the Vinh loss has been dampened somewhat by our ability to intercept evidence of movement through two way-stations in the Laos Panhandle, the current infiltration picture is not clear. Some groups do not have to pass through the two way-stations in Laos and, therefore, are not reflected in communications. Moreover, it is quite possible that the lack of detections is an indication that infiltration starts have been curtailed or delayed as a result of Operation LAM SON 719. Additional time will be required to determine if such is the case or whether groups are moving in the system but are, as yet, undetected. Based on available evidence, the estimate of personnel moving toward South Vietnam/Cambodia since 1 October 1970 remains at some 48,300 - 49,800.

South Vietnam Developments

[REDACTED] President Thieu was reported to have decided to terminate the operation in Laos on or about 31 March. The decision was made following a briefing in which it was pointed out that the onset of the rainy season in April would seriously affect troop mobility and air support. For the final phase of the operation, Thieu ordered that an attack be planned against the major enemy junction of Muong Nong in the western part of Base Area 611.

Marine Commandant General Khang commented separately that the operation would end around March 28 and that attacks against Base Area 611 are planned afterwards. Khang opined that LAM SON 719 was strategically sound, but added, somewhat carpingly, that many tactical errors were made by local ARVN commanders which may have resulted in the higher than anticipated ARVN casualties. Khang believes that the Laos operation has been successful in disrupting the enemy's supply system, but he added that in view of the heavy NVA resistance more ARVN forces should have been committed to the operation.

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